

D-737
Russell Hall Seafood
Fishing Creek
Private

c. 1940

For much of the twentieth century, seafood packing facilities have been a defining feature of Old House Point near the mouth of Back Creek where it meets the Honga River. The extant Russell Hall seafood packinghouse is a mid twentieth century concrete block walled structure erected to process oysters, crab, and fish. The single-story structure was built at the water's edge on ground filled with discarded oyster shell. The packinghouse follows a linear plan with an office at the front and work spaces located down a narrow hall. Only modest additions and alterations have been made to the building since its initial construction, thereby making it one of the most intact packinghouses in Dorchester County that dates from the mid twentieth century.

Russell Hall founded Russell Hall Seafood in Fishing Creek in 1939. He purchased property that had been a crab and oyster business in 1934 run by H. Hansel Tyler, and in 1917 by Henry I. Phillips. This property was near the packinghouse of his father-in-law, Charles H. Parks, also in Fishing Creek. Russell Hall's packinghouse was built on pilings. Over the years, each room had its wooden floor removed and the structure was gradually underpinned with concrete. Russell Hall Seafood has packed crabmeat, hard and soft crabs, oysters, and fish, mostly hardheads. The company sold shucked oysters to the A & P grocery stores. During World War II they sold fish to wholesalers who sold them to Fort Meade in Laurel, Maryland, as well as other military bases.

The company stopped packing oysters in the early 1950s when the oyster harvests declined. Russell Hall's son-in-law Rufus M. "Bobby" Todd, a high school teacher in Cambridge, helped to operate the business and took over when Russell Hall died in 1964. At the peak of the crabmeat business, the company could pick 1,000 pounds a day. Beginning about 1980, Mr. Todd stopped packing crabmeat and only sold hard and soft crabs because of the

difficulty in hiring pickers. The 25 to 30 local women who had made up the workforce were getting old, had died, or were moving away.

Harry Phillips began leasing the packinghouse in 1992 or 1993 and purchased the property in 1998. He added a freezer and remodeled the interior of the building to accommodate modern requirements. In 2000, he employed 30 people, mostly Mexican migrant workers under the Federal H-2B Guest Worker Program, picking crabmeat, shedding soft shell crabs and processing fish.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-737

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Russell Hall Seafood, Inc.
other _____

2. Location

street and number 2501 Old House Point Road _____ not for publication
city, town Fishing Creek vicinity _____
county Dorchester

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Russell Hall Seafood, Inc. c/o Harry Phillips
street and number P. O. Box 156 telephone 410-397-3490
city, town Fishing Creek state Maryland zip code 21634

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber MLB 388 folio 807
city, town Cambridge tax map 100 tax parcel 32 tax ID number 6-089011

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- _____ Contributing Resource in National Register District
_____ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
_____ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Recorded by HABS/HAER
_____ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
_____ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<u>_____</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<u>1</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<u>_____</u>
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	<u>_____</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	<u>_____</u>
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			<u>_____</u>

7. Description

Inventory No. D-737

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Russell Hall Seafood packing house is located at the end of Old House Point Road in Fishing Creek on Hoopers Island, Dorchester County, Maryland. The single-story concrete block and frame complex is located at the water's edge of Back Creek, a tributary of the Honga River. The principal building is oriented with a gable-front wall facing north and the roof is oriented on a north/south axis.

Built in stages beginning around 1940-50, the single-story concrete block packing house is supported on a poured concrete foundation, and the concrete block walls rise a single story height to frame gable end walls. The center gable-front main block was built simultaneously with concrete block wall shed roofed sections to each side. The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Standing adjacent to the main building off the southeast corner is a single story gable roofed concrete block cooler. The south side of the building is built over the water's edge with a combination concrete and wood platform with docking facilities.

The north (main) elevation of the packing house is an asymmetrical gable-front elevation with an entrance located in the west shed roofed section. A board door hung on long strap hinges is flanked by rectangular window openings fitted with brick sills and small shed roofed hoods. Attached to the east side of the front elevation is a single-story gable roofed section of concrete block wall construction with a gable roof of asphalt shingles. The upper wall surface above the first story is sheathed with plain weatherboard siding, and the edge of the roof is finished with a slightly extended eave and open soffits. The upper gable end wall surface is pierced by a six-pane attic window.

The east side of the packing house is a concrete block wall pierced by a double door entrance and a series of six-pane windows. The southeast corner of the east shed is partially covered by the single-story gable roofed, concrete block cooler. A concrete block stack pierces the roof.

The west side of the packing house is defined by two six-pane windows, whereas four former openings have been blocked up. The southwest side of the west shed is an open area partially enclosed with a concrete block knee wall and screened panels.

The south side of the packing house is a part concrete block, part frame wall. The first floor is defined by a concrete knee wall with rectangular openings above that have hinged covers attached to pulleys and ropes for opening and closing. The upper wall surface is covered with a combination of corrugated tin and horizontal weatherboards. Defining the edge of the roof is a slightly extended eave with an open soffit. A squarish screened opening pierces the gable end wall.

The east side shed roofed section is pierced by a double door opening with board half leaf doors. Rising through the roof is a round metal stove pipe.

Maryland Historical Trust

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Name Russell Hall Seafood Packinghouse
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 1

The interior of the packing house consists of painted concrete block walls, poured concrete floors, and board covered ceilings. Entrance through the north side door provides access to a long passage that extends through the middle of the building. Located in the northwest corner of the west shed is the company office. South of the office, the passage leads to a center break room, off of which are located the packing and weighing room, the picking room on the east, and the steamer room on the southwest. Also located on the west side is a large cooler.

8. Significance

Inventory No. D-737

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

For much of the twentieth century, seafood packing facilities have been a defining feature of Old House Point at the mouth of Back Creek where it meets the Honga River. The extant Russell Hall seafood packinghouse is a mid twentieth century concrete block walled structure erected to process oysters, crab, and fish. The single-story structure was built at the water's edge on ground filled with discarded oyster shell. The packinghouse follows a longitudinal plan with the office at the front and the work spaces located down a narrow hall. Modest additions and/or alterations have been made to the building since its initial construction, thereby making it one of the most intact packinghouses in Dorchester County that dates from the mid twentieth century.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Russell Hall founded Russell Hall Seafood in Fishing Creek, Maryland in 1939. He purchased property that had been a crab and oyster business in 1934 run by H. Hansel Tyler, and in 1917 by Henry I. Phillips. This property was near the packinghouse of his father-in-law, Charles H. Parks, also in Fishing Creek. Russell Hall's packinghouse was built on pilings. Over the years, each room had its wooden floor removed and the structure was gradually underpinned with concrete. Russell Hall Seafood has packed crabmeat, hard and soft crabs, oysters and fish, mostly hardheads. The company sold shucked oysters to the A & P grocery stores. During World War II, they sold fish to wholesalers who sold them to Fort Meade in Laurel, Maryland, and other military bases. The company purchased ice from the Crystal Ice Company in Cambridge.¹

Oysters were sent by truck as far away as Lansing, Michigan. The company stopped packing oysters in the early 1950s when the oyster harvests declined. Russell Hall's son-in-law Rufus M. "Bobby" Todd, a high school teacher in Cambridge, helped operate the business and took over when Russell Hall died in 1964. Mr. Todd retired from teaching in 1978 and continued to run the business. The company began pasteurizing crabmeat in the early 1980s. At one time, the company had as much as 50,000 pounds of pasteurized crabmeat in their coolers. Crabmeat was pasteurized in the fall when consumer demand was low but the crab catch was plentiful. The company sold fresh and pasteurized crabmeat to the Baltimore wholesale fish market, as well as to customers in Ocean City, Maryland, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Asbury Park, New Jersey, and New York. They sold 100 pound boxes of fish to Norfolk, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New

¹ Interview with Rufus M. "Bobby" Todd, Fishing Creek, Maryland, May 30, 2001.

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Name Russell Hall Seafood Packinghouse
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

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Harry Phillips began leasing the packinghouse in 1992 or 1993 and purchased the property in 1998. He added a freezer and remodeled the interior of the building. In 2000, he employed 30 people, mostly Mexican migrant workers under the Federal H-2B non-agricultural guest worker program, picking crabmeat, shedding soft shell crabs and processing fish.²

² 2000 Maryland/DC Manufacturers Directory, p. 368.

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Name Russell Hall Seafood Packinghouse
Continuation Sheet

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Russell Hall Seafood, Inc.
Old House Point Road
Fishing Creek, Dorchester County, Maryland
Chain of title

MLB 388/807

Rufus M. Todd & Loraine Hall Todd, trustees

to

11/9/1998

Russell Hall Seafood, Inc.
Being all of the land and property described in a deed dated 11/15/1995,
MLB 379/266, from Loraine Hall Todd to the herein named Grantors,
plus the remaining two thirds having been acquired by Russell S. Hall
and Pauline Hall in deeds from Lula R. Adams, 2/4/1960, PLC 118/533
and from Bernie White and Edith White, 4/18/1960, 118/536

MLB 379/226

Loraine Hall Todd

to

11/15/1995

Rufus M. Todd, et al.

PLC 118/540

J. Otis McAllister, trustee

to

4/12/1960

Russell S. Hall & Pauline Hall
Loraine Hall Todd & Rufus M. Todd

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

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Name Russell Hall Seafood Packinghouse
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

JFD 38/108

Emerson C. Harrison, executor for Albertha Tyler

to

7/20/1938

Lula Adams, Russell Hall, Bernie White 1/3 interest each

JFD 31/23, 4/11/1934, Whereas, by contract in writing, dated 4/23/1937, Albertha Tyler....in her life time bargained and sold unto the grantees... the land and property....upon the grantees getting permission from the War Department or other governmental agencies to erect a wharf or pier off the land hereby intended to be conveyed, and upon the condition that if said pier or wharf was so built, she and her family were to have certain rights and privileges to use the same, to the building of which said pier or wharf she consented; and whereas, after the said pier or wharf had been erected with the consent and approval of the War Department or other governmental agency, and after the balance of the purchase money had been paid over to the said Albertha Tyler, but before the deed for said land and property had actually executed and delivered...the said Albertha Tyler departed this life, Emerson C. Harrington, executor conveying the same to them [Lula R. Adams, Russell Hall, Bernie White] as tenants in common, an undivided on third interest to each....

JFD 31/23

H. Hansel Tyler' executors

to

4/11/1934

Albertha Tyler
21 parcels at auction

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Historic Properties Form

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Name Russell Hall Seafood Packinghouse
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 4

WHM 3/415

T. Sangston Insley, Trustee

to

5/26/1917

H. Hansel Tyler

all that....parcel of land situated on the eastward side of the county road and extending back therefrom to Back Creek, on Upper Hooper's Island...being the same lot of land upon which the said Henry I. Phillips formerly conducted the crab and oyster business....

PLC 118/533

Lula R. Adams

to

2/4/1960

Russell S. Hall & Pauline Hall
Loraine Hall Todd & Rufus M. Todd
2 lots or parcels of land

RSM 41/252

Emerson C. Harrington, trustee

to

6/14/1940

Lula R. Adams

4 ½ acres

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Name Russell Hall Seafood Packinghouse
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 5

WHM 8/682

Warner Travers & Lydia A. Travers

to

6/26/1920

H. Hansel Tyler

5 acres

CL 30/656

Samuel W. Lewis, Sr. et al.

to

5/16/1905

Warner Travers

5 acres

PLC 118/536

Bernie White & Edith White

to

4/18/1960

Russell S. Hall & Pauline Hall
Loraine Hall Todd & Rufus M. Todd

A parcel 80 feet long, 15 feet wide part of Lot #19 in a deed to
Albertha Tyler JFD 38/108, 7/20/1938

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. D-737

Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse.
(For full list of resources see footnotes)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .21 acres
Acreage of historical setting 5 acres
Quadrangle name Honga, Maryland

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The historic metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

11. Form Prepared by

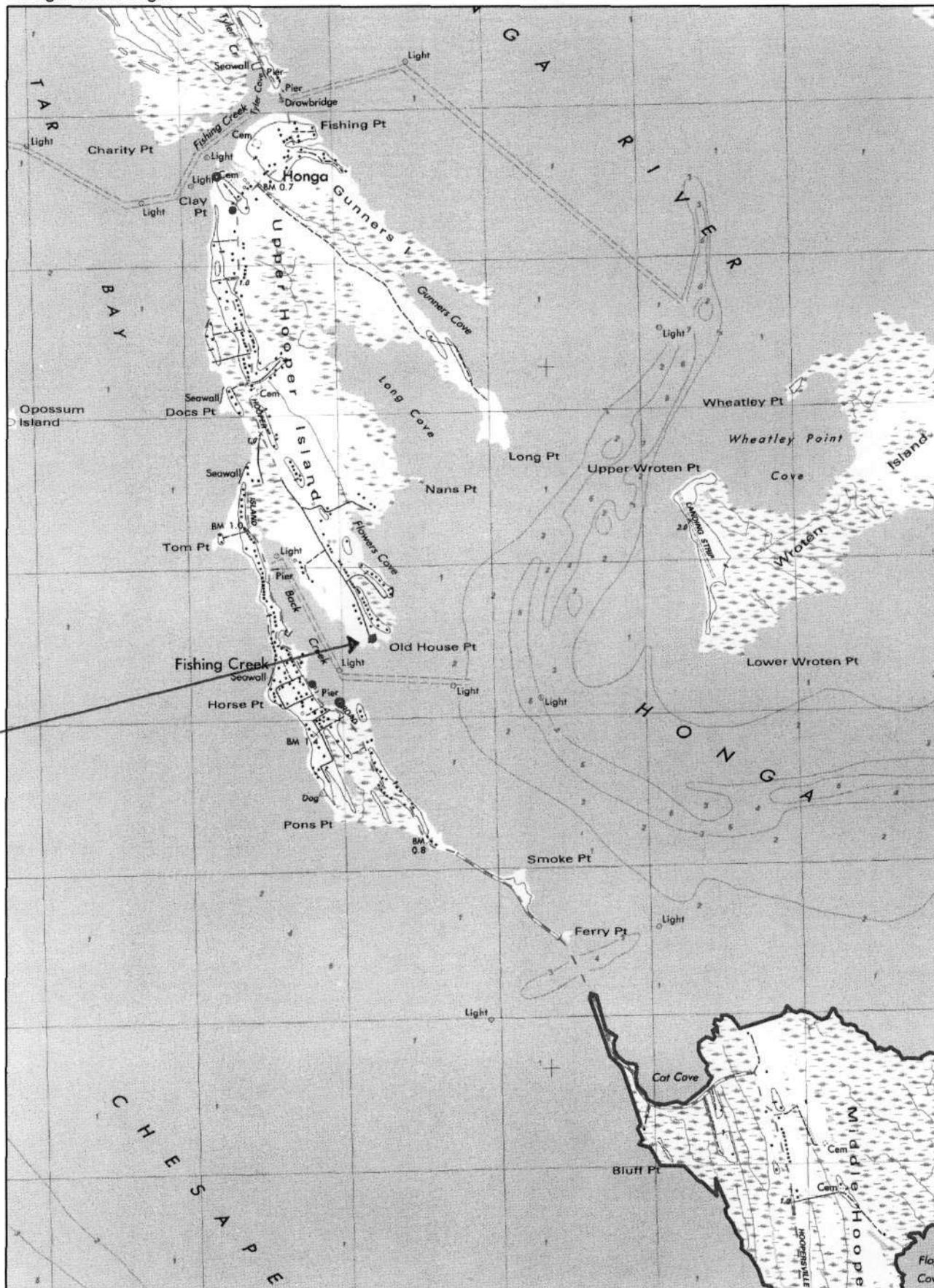
name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian; Virginia Jenkins, Business Historian		
organization	Private Consultants	date	5/30/2001
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

D-737
 Russell Hall Seaford
 Old House Point
 Honga Quadrangle





D-737

Russell Hall Seakoo

Fishing Creek, Dorchester Co., MD.

North Elevation

5/2001, Paul Touant, Photographic

NEZ / MD Historical Trust

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D-737

Russell Hall SEARDON

KISTON CREEK, DORCHESTER Co., MD.

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

5/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER

N.B. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

20K 11



D-737

Russell Hall Seafood

Fishing Creek, Dorchester Co., MD.

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

5/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER

W&L / M.D. HISTORICAL TRUST

3 x 11.



D-737

RUSSELL HALL SEACU 10

VISITING CREEK, DORCHESTER Co. M.D.

SOUTH ELEVATION

5/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER
NEG. / M.D. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-737

Russell Ithru SEAFORD

KISITING CREEK, DORCHESTER Co., MD.

WITARK - SOUTH SIDE

5/2001, Paul Tourant, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEG/MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

5 OF 11



D-737

RUSSELL ILM SEAFORD

FRISING CREEK, DORCHESTER Co., MD.

PEELED TANKS AND WITARE

5/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHIC
NEZ./MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

6 02 10

**RUSSELL HALL
SEAFOOD**

CRAB & CRAYFISH
FISHING CREEK, MD.
410-391-2400-410-391-1013



D-737

Russell Hall Station

Fishing Creek, Dorchester Co., Md.

Peeler Tanks and Wier

5/2001, Paul Turner, PITTSBURGH
NEED. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-737

RUSSELL HALL SEAFOOD

FISHING CREEK, DOCKTERTON CO., MD.

REPORT

5/2001, PAUL TOWNAT, PHOTOGRAPHER

Md. / M.D. HISTORICAL TRUST

8 or 11



D-737

Russell Lane Seneca

Visiting Creek, Dorchester Co., MD.

Return Room and Passage to Cooler

5/2001, Paul Touart, Pitot Capital

Mt. / MD. Historical Trust

9 or 11



D-737

RUSSELL Hall SEAROOD

FISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER Co., MD.

PICNIC ROOM

5/2001, PAUL TOWARI, PITTSBURGH
NEZ./MD. INSTITUTION TAUST

10 or 11



D-737

Russell 1 tail SEAKO 02

FISHING CREEK, DOMESTICATED Co., MD.

PICKING ROOM

5/2001, Paul Touart, PHOTOGRAPHIC
NEB./MD. HISTORICAL TIMES

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